Broken roads and motorists

By Wajahat Ijaz

GUJRAT, Dec 31: Some wise men have rightly said that if you want to assess the economy of a country, then do not see luxury vehicles plying on its roads but see the condition of tracks they move on.

They saying is true in case of Pakistan which does have luxury vehicles but lacks quality roads and highways, mainly for want of funds and, to some extent, poor planning and corruption.

Broken roads of Gujrat city and adjoining localities have virtually become unmotorable. The worst areas are New Bus Stand, Old Bus Stand Road, Dinga Road, Mungowal Road, Sargodha Road, Bhimber Road, Ramtalai Road, and Karrianwala Road.

The Dinga Road reportedly showed potholes immediately after its opening because of alleged use of sub-standard material in its construction.

The Punjab Highways Department and the Municipal Committee who are responsible for roads show no interest in repairing the damage.

About two kilometres long up track of the GT Road between Lalamusa and Gujrat, from Verowal to Chokory Nullah, is in bad shape for the last six years.

The affected area remains flooded with sewage due to defective planning by the Public Health Engineering Department. Motorists, specially those using the track daily, face untold hardships and sustain huge financial losses in shape of wear and tear of their vehicles.

At present the track is not motorable and forces motorists to use the down lane for two kilometres. However, the life is not safe on this track either because heavy rush of vehicles results in collisions. Especially, the point where a vehicle enters the up track has become a death trap.

According to an estimate, over a dozen people have died and 34 sustained critical injuries during the last six years in collisions between vehicles. The down lane on this section is highly dangerous for those who use two-wheelers.

After several appeals by citizens and scores of protest rallies by the area people, some three months ago a senior official of the National Highway Authority visited the site and directed the department to start the repair.

The contractor who has started work is executing it at a snail's pace. A couple of weeks ago this correspondent saw only four labourers spreading stone on the track. If this pace is maintained, the track will hopefully be re-carpeted in next six years.

GUJRAT: The up track of the GT Road near Lalamusa is in a shambles for the last six years.—Dawn